

# 1 AUGUST 2021 Sunday Message 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

O God, come to my assistance;  
O Lord, make haste to help me!  
You are my rescuer, my help;  
O Lord, do not delay.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;

you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,  
and answer their prayers with unceasing  
kindness,  
that, for those who glory in you as their  
Creator and guide,  
you may restore what you have created  
and keep safe what you have restored...  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

A reading from the book of Exodus.

The whole community of the sons of Israel began to complain against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and said to them, "Why did we not die at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we were able to sit down to pans of meat and could eat bread to our heart's content! As it is, you have brought us to this wilderness to starve this whole company to death!"

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now I will rain down bread for you from the heavens. Each day the people are to go out and gather the day's portion; I propose to test them in this way to see whether they will follow my law or not."

"I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Say this to them, 'Between the two evenings you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have bread to your heart's content. Then you will learn that I, the Lord, am your God.'" And so it came about: quails flew up in the evening, and they covered the camp; in the morning there was a coating of dew all round the camp. When the coating of dew lifted, there on the surface of the desert was a thing delicate, powdery, as fine as hoarfrost on the ground. When they saw this, the sons of Israel said to one another, "What is that?" not knowing what it was. "That" said Moses to them "is the bread the Lord gives you to eat."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 77

Response:

The Lord gave them bread from heaven.

1. The things we have heard and understood,  
the things our fathers have told us,  
we will tell to the next generation:  
the glories of the Lord and his might. (R.)

2. He commanded the clouds above  
and opened the gates of heaven.  
He rained down manna for their food,  
and gave them bread from heaven. (R.)

3. Mere men ate the bread of angels.  
He sent them abundance of food.  
He brought them to his holy land,  
to the mountain which his right hand had won. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

I want to urge you in the name of the Lord, not to go on living the aimless kind of life that pagans live. Now that is hardly the way you have learnt from Christ, unless you failed to hear him properly when you were taught what the truth is in Jesus. You must give up your old way of life; you must put aside your old self, which gets corrupted by following illusory desires. Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the new self that has been created in God's way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord;  
no one can come to the Father except through me.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

John 6:24-35

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

When the people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into boats and crossed to Capernaum to look for Jesus. When they found him on the other side, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered:

"I tell you most solemnly you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat.

Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for food that endures to eternal life, the kind of food the Son of Man is offering you, for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal."

Then they said to him, "What must we do if we are to do the works that God wants?" Jesus gave them this answer, "This is working for God: you must believe in the one he has sent." So they said, "What sign will you give to show us that we should believe in you? What work will you do? Our fathers had manna to eat in the desert; as scripture says: He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

Jesus answered:

"I tell you most solemnly, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven,

it is my Father who gives you the bread from heaven,  
the true bread;  
for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said "give us that bread always." Jesus answered:

"I am the bread of life;  
He who comes to me will never be hungry;  
he who believes in me will never thirst."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Graciously sanctify these gifts, O Lord, we pray,  
and, accepting the oblation of this spiritual sacrifice,  
make of us an eternal offering to you.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

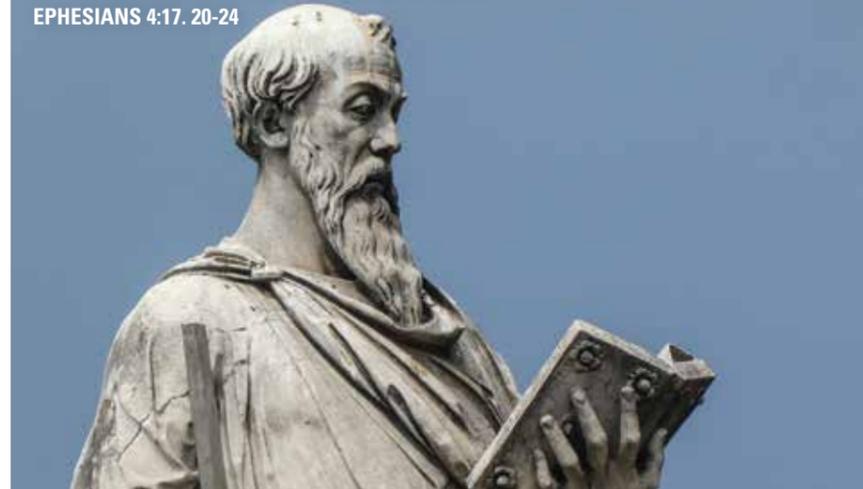
You have given us, O Lord, bread from heaven,  
endowed with all delights and sweetness in every taste.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Accompany with constant protection, O Lord, those you renew with these heavenly gifts and, in your never-failing care for them, make them worthy of eternal redemption.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**THE WORD****A TOTAL MAKEOVER**

EPHESIANS 4:17, 20-24



Statue of St Paul on Ponte Sant'Angelo, Rome, Italy, by early Renaissance sculptor Paolo Romano

In today's second reading, St Paul urges the Christian community at Ephesus to get a makeover. They must throw away the old self, he says, and put on the new self.

Paul wasn't offering them sartorial advice or suggesting that they upgrade their physical appearance in order to look ten years younger. He wasn't talking about makeup or fashion at all, but about a transformation of mind and spirit. The followers of Jesus in Ephesus must not go on living the aimless kind of lives that pagans live, but become whole new people in Christ, renewed by a spiritual revolution. They must be changed, reformed, transformed, into a Godly people.

Paul knew what he was talking about. His own dramatic experience on the road to Damascus changed his life completely. He threw away the old self and put on the new self. He even began using a new name. Through his encounter with the risen Lord, Paul's life had been upended utterly. Our encounter with the risen Lord, the bread of life, must upend and transform our lives, too. ■

**REFLECT**

A couple of years ago, young American writer Jia Tolentino wrote a book called *Trick Mirror*. It's a collection of essays on the challenges facing young women today. One essay is entitled "Always be Optimizing". It's about the pressure women have always felt to look good, be attractive. The need to always be optimising; in other words, trying always to look better, be thinner, more glamorous, sexier, to never be satisfied with your appearance or success.

It's not only women who feel this pressure nowadays. Young men feel it increasingly too – the need to work out, to be ripped, athletic, desirable.

Our competitive world pressurises us

to be acknowledged as successful, with a rewarding career and a big income, a perfect family and a nice house. To always be optimising. Social media, with its obsession with looks and money and celebrity, makes being your authentic self even harder. It's a reason why sales of makeup, even to young men, are booming. Image is everything.

It explains why Reality TV shows like *Ten Years Younger* and *100% Hotter* are so popular. On these shows, participants receive a makeover that alters or enhances how they look, bringing out or highlighting their best features. Seeing their before and after pics is like looking at a completely different person. We see the difference a new look can make, its transformative effect.

**SAY**

"Lord, never let me settle for anything less than to hunger for you who are the bread of life. Mould me in your image. Amen."

**LEARN**

Today is the feast of St Alphonsus de Ligouri, founder of the Redemptorists. A native of Naples in Italy, Alphonsus was a successful lawyer before becoming a priest. In 1732, while visiting the Amalfi coast, he was struck by the plight of the poor farmers and goatherds of the area who had been largely abandoned by Church and State. He founded the Redemptorists to minister especially to those who were poor and marginalised. St Alphonsus was also a moral theologian and author of more than 100 books. In 1871, he was declared a doctor of the Church. Today, more than 5,000 Redemptorists minister throughout the world.

**DO**

Think about what is most important to you, what you long for most. How strong is your hunger for God? Where do you turn for nourishment, for help, for life? Does God sustain you?

Who or what gives direction to your life? Is God at its centre?

**PRAY**

Pray for those who struggle with belief. Pray for yourself and for Christians everywhere for a deeper faith in Jesus, the bread of life.

Liturgy is also about transformation. We are invited to give up our old way of life, and put on the new self, one created in God.

The new self we are invited to put on is not as simple as getting a new wardrobe or hairstyle like the participants on a TV show, or giving up home and family and livelihood. Rather, it is about making sure that God is the director of our lives, that God shapes everything we do every day.

Putting on the new self means putting on God. It means following the example of Jesus, and allowing ourselves to be moulded in his image. It means knowing that Jesus is our bread of life, who nourishes and sustains us, and gives us everything that we need. ■